

LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION

Matthew 6:13

The Lord's Prayer – Week 8

By Andy Manning

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In 1857, the Fulton Street Dutch Reformed Church hired a business man to do city missions work in New York City. He was a 40-year old man named Jeremiah Calvin Lanphier. He came up with the idea of a noon prayer meeting for any and all who would come. It was on Mondays, from 12-1 pm. He handed out 20,000 fliers, and the first Monday, six people showed up; then 20; then forty. A request was made to meet daily. Soon 3,000 people were meeting daily for prayer at the church. The YMCA was added as a site for prayer, and then other churches. Soon it spread to every major northern city. In Philadelphia, 3,000 prayed daily at Jayne's Hall. In Chicago, 2,000 prayed daily at the Metropolitan Theatre. People stopped eating lunch, or they would grab a quick snack, but they would spend their time in prayer. The noon prayer meetings spread throughout the North, and then to the South – even down in Dallas, Texas. As a result, one million people around the country were saved.
2. Prayer is powerful. That's why the Bible is so insistent that we pray.
3. So in this sermon series we are learning how to pray more powerfully by studying The Lord's Prayer.
4. Let's recite it together: "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."
5. The Lord's Prayer has six petitions. The first three have to do with God's interests and God's concerns – Thy name, Thy kingdom, Thy will. The last three requests are for our concerns. In the last three requests we are praying for provision (give us), pardon (forgive us), and protection (deliver us).

6. Today we are going to look at the last petition in the Lord's Prayer.
7. **Matthew 6:13 (KJV)** "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."
8. This petition reminds us of two big truths for the Christian life:
 - i. God wants us to be holy.
 1. **1 Peter 1:14-16** "14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires of your former ignorance. 15 But as the one who called you is holy, you also are to be holy in all your conduct; 16 for it is written, Be holy, because I am holy."
 2. What is holiness? Holiness is moral conformity to the will and character of God.
 3. There is a negative and a positive aspect to holiness: Take off, and put on. Negatively, holiness means to take off sin. Positively, holiness to put on Christlike character.
 4. **Ephesians 4:22-23** "22 to take off, your former way of life, the old self that is corrupted by deceitful desires, 23 to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, 24 and to put on, the new self, the one created according to God's likeness in righteousness and purity of the truth."
 - ii. The pursuit of holiness is a battle.
 1. It is not easy. It is a struggle. It is a war. It requires total dedication and total effort.
 2. Why is living a holy life a difficult? Because of temptation. Even though we desire to live a holy life, we are constantly being tempted to sin – by the world, by the flesh (our own desire to sin), and the devil.
 3. That's what this sixth request is all about it. It's a prayer for help to overcome to temptation so that we can live holy lives.
9. The best explanation for the sixth request comes from the Westminster Shorter Catechism.
10. **The Westminster Shorter Catechism** (Q106) says, "What do we pray for in the sixth petition? In the sixth petition (which is, And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil) we pray that God would either keep

us from being tempted to sin, or support and deliver us when we are tempted."

11. The catechism says that the sixth request can be broken down into two requests.

II. TWO REQUESTS

1. Keep us from being tempted to sin.

i. **Matthew 6:13 (KJV)** "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

ii. The Greek word for "temptation" (*peirasmos*) can mean two things in the Bible. Trial, or temptation. When you see the word "trial," it is the same word for temptation. When you see the word "temptation," it is the same word for "trial." The only way we know which word is meant is by looking at the context.

1. Test or trial.

a. A test or a trial is a difficulty that God allows us to experience to strengthen our faith.

b. It is a trying circumstance or a difficult situation orchestrated in our lives by God. (Al Mohler, *The Prayer That Turns The World Upside Down*, 150.)

c. **J.I. Packer** calls it "... a situation that reveals how far you are able to go right and avoid going wrong." (*Praying the Lord's Prayer*, 86.)

d. If you pass the test, it encourages you and glorifies God. If you fail the test, it reveals your weaknesses and makes you stronger.

e. It's like a test in school. If you Ace the test, it encourages you. If you may a B or worse, it reveals how you need to grow.

f. God tested Abraham when He asked him to sacrifice his son. Abraham passed the test, which glorified God, and God bless him (Gen 22).

g. **James 1:2-4** "Consider it a great joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you experience various trials, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance. 4 And let endurance have its full

effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking nothing.”

- i. The Greek word for “trials” is the same word in the Lord’s Prayer that is interpreted “temptation.”
- ii. Why should we consider it a great joy when we go through trials? Because any time God allows you to experience a trial, the purpose is to help you grow.

2. Temptation.

- a. Temptation is an enticement to sin. It is an attempt to bring about your moral downfall. It is a solicitation to evil. It is the deliberate invitation or seduction to sin. It is an incentive that motivates you to sin.
 - b. Think about fishing. When you go fishing, you want the fish to bite your hook. So, to get them to bite the hook, you make the hook look very attractive with bait – something that is very shiny, or smelly. Sin is the hook, and temptation is the bait. The devil tempts us by making sin look attractive. He promises that sin will bring pleasure or remove pain.
 - c. Temptation is an invitation to sin; it is an encouragement to engage in something contrary to God’s law. (Al Mohler, *The Prayer That Turns The World Upside Down*, 150.)
 - d. Two examples of this are Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, when the serpent tempted them to eat of the forbidden fruit; and Jesus in the wilderness, when Satan tempted him three times to sin.
 - e. This is the meaning of the word in the Lord’s Prayer. It is an enticement to sin.
- iii. What does Jesus say about temptation?
 - iv. This is not a request for God to not tempt us. God does not tempt us to sin.

- v. **James 1:13** “13 No one undergoing a trial should say, “I am being tempted by God,” since God is not tempted by evil, and he himself doesn’t tempt anyone.”
- vi. So, what does this request mean? It is prayer for God to keep us from being tempted.
- vii. The easiest way to overcome temptation is to avoid it. This is a prayer for God to help us avoid it.
- viii. This is a request for preventing grace. Prevent us from experiencing temptation.
- ix. **The Westminster Larger Catechism** says (Q195) says, “... that we and all his people may by his providence be kept from being tempted to sin....”
- x. We can’t avoid all temptation. We would have to be taken out of the world for that to be possible. But this is a prayer for God to help us avoid as much temptation as possible.
- xi. **J.I. Packer** writes, "The conclusion of the matter is this. For good and necessary reasons connected with our Christian growth, we shall not be spared all temptation. But if we ask to be spared and watch and pray against Satan's attempts to exploit situations for our downfall, we shall be tempted less than we might have been, and we will find ourselves able to cope with temptation when it comes." (Praying the Lord's Prayer, 89.)
- xii. **R.C. Sproul** writes, "Jesus showed that we are to ask the Father to spare us from the temptations and the spiritual attacks that can lead us into new sin." (The Prayer of the Lord, 87.)
- xiii. In order to pray effectively, we must pray sincerely. We must really mean it. What is the test of sincerity for this request? You are doing everything in your power to avoid temptation.
- xiv. **A.W. Pink** wrote, “First, it is our bounded duty to avoid those persons and places that would allure us into sin....” (The Lord's Prayer, 50.)
- xv. **Randy Alcorn** said, “It’s always easier to avoid temptation than to resist it.”
- xvi. There’s **an old saying** that goes like his: “Temptation usually comes in through a door that has deliberately been left open.”

2. Support and deliver us when we are tempted.

- i. **Matthew 6:13 (KJV)** “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”
- ii. The first part of this petition is for God to keep us out of temptation altogether. The second part is for when we are being tempted. It is a prayer for strength and support so that we don’t yield to temptation.
- iii. There is no way to live free of temptation. We will, sooner or later, encounter it. When we do, this is prayer for deliverance.
- iv. When you do encounter temptation you might ask, “Why did God allow me to be tempted? I prayed for him to keep me away from temptation?” It is because God knew you could handle it. God is using it as a test to reveal your faith, to glorify God, to encourage others, and to make you even stronger.
- v. God will never allow you to be tempted beyond what you can bear.
- vi. **1 Corinthians 10:13** “No temptation has come upon you except what is common to humanity. But God is faithful; he will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to bear it.”
- vii. But when the temptation comes, we must pray, “Deliver us from evil. Do not let us succumb to temptation.”
- viii. **J.I. Packer** writes, "When you are not conscious of temptation, pray 'lead us not into temptation,' and when you are conscious of it, pray 'deliver us from evil,' and you will live." (Praying the Lord's Prayer, 90.)
- ix. **The Heidelberg Catechism** (Q127) says, “And so, Lord, uphold us and make us strong with the strength of Your Holy Spirit, so that we may not go down to defeat in this spiritual struggle, but may firmly resist our enemies until we finally win the complete victory.”
- x. **The Westminster Larger Catechism** says (Q195) says, “... if tempted, that by His Spirit we may be powerfully supported and enabled to stand in the hour of temptation...”

- xi. The sixth petition has four important implications:
 - 1. We are in a battle.
 - a. The word “evil” in the Lord’s Prayer can be translated “evil,” or the “evil one.” If we translate it “evil,” then it simply refers to sin. “Deliver us from sin. Give us strength to overcome temptation so that we don’t sin.” If we translate it “evil one,” then it refers to the Devil, or Satan, whom the Bible calls the tempter (Mt 5:3). It is a prayer for God to help us overcome the devil’s temptations. Either way, the prayer is for God to help us overcome temptation.
 - b. As Christians, we are in a battle.
 - c. **Ephesians 6:11-12** “11 Put on the full armor of God so that you can stand against the schemes of the devil. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this darkness, against evil, spiritual forces in the heavens.”
 - d. The Lord’s Prayer teaches us the three dimensions of the Christian life:
 - i. Devotion: We are to be devoted to God’s name, God’s kingdom, and God’s will.
 - ii. Dependence: We need God every moment of the day, for every area of our lives. We need His grace for provision (give us), pardon (forgive us), and protection (deliver us).
 - iii. Danger: The Christian is constantly under attack. He is constantly at war.
 - 1. **J.I. Packer** writes, “Deliver us from evil' is a plea for protection in the face of danger that threatens....” (Praying the Lord's Prayer, 93.)
 - e. **It’s been said**, “Opportunity knocks once, but temptation bangs on your door forever.” We are in a battle!

- f. If we are in a battle, then who are our enemies?
- g. The Bible teaches that there are three primary sources of temptation: the world, the devil, and the flesh. These are the Christians three great enemies.
 - i. The world.
 - 1. **1 John 2:15-16** “15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride in one’s possessions—is not from the Father, but is from the world.”
 - 2. The world includes unbelievers who are driven by the desire for pleasure, possessions, position, and praise. The people of this world constantly pressure Christians to disregard God’s commandments and join in with them.
 - ii. The devil (or Satan).
 - 1. Five Quick Facts About Satan:
 - a. He exists.
 - b. He is evil. He is a liar, a murderer, a thief, extremely sinful.
 - c. He is active. He is on the prowl. **1 Peter 5:8** “Be sober-minded, be alert. Your adversary the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for anyone he can devour.”
 - d. He cannot possess/control you. As a Christian, the devil cannot possess you, but he can oppress you. He cannot force you to do anything, but he can tempt you. He can put thoughts and ideas in

your head; he can put people and things in your path to tempt you.

- e. He is under God's control. He is not as powerful as God, and he can only do what God allows him to do.

iii. The flesh.

1. **James 1:14** "But each person is tempted when he is drawn away and enticed by his own evil desire."
2. The flesh is your natural desire to sin. Even though you are a Christian, you will carry the flesh with you until you die. A part of you will always crave sin.
3. Even if you didn't have to worry about the world of the devil, you would still have to struggle with temptation because of your own desire to sin.

h. So, temptation can be both external internal. When it comes from the world or the devil, it is external. But when it comes from our flesh, it is internal.

2. We cannot overcome temptation on our own.
 - a. That's why it tells us to seek God for help.
 - b. The worst thing you can do is to think that you can overcome temptation without God's help.
3. God wants to help us overcome temptation.
 - a. That Jesus tells us to ask for God's help in temptation implies that God is ready and willing to help.
4. We must pray to secure God's help against temptation.
 - a. This is why the Lord's Prayer is essential. We need God's help; God wants to help; but help is only given to those who ask.

xii. To sincerely pray for help with temptation, we must do all in our strength to overcome temptation.

xiii. How can we overcome temptation?

1. Avoid temptation when possible.
 - a. If you're carrying around gas can, it's best if you stay as far away from fire as possible.
 - b. My wife's regular advice to our kids is, "Don't be dumb."
 - c. The Parable of the Doughnuts, by Randy Alcorn
 - i. Imagine someone whose weakness is eating doughnuts. His doctor says, "No more doughnuts." He vows to God, "No more doughnuts." He promises his family, "No more doughnuts." He calls the church and gets on the prayer chain. He even goes to a doughnut deliverance ministry to have the demon of doughnut desire cast out of him. Here's a guy that means business, right? But then what does he do? Well, if he's like a lot of us, he goes right on reading about doughnuts, listening to doughnut music, and watching television programs about making doughnuts. He spends his time with other doughnut lovers talking about doughnuts, and he jokes about doughnuts at his office, where he often glances at the doughnut calendars on the wall. He looks through the newspaper for doughnut coupons and subscribes to "Doughnut Desires," with its glossy color photos. It's not long before he's driving the long way to work that just happens to go by a doughnut shop. He rolls down the window and inhales. Pretty soon he's buying the morning paper from the rack right outside the doughnut shop. He's lingering just long enough to check out the doughnuts through the window. Then he remembers he has to make a phone call, and hey, what do you know, the doughnut shop has

a pay phone. And since he's there anyway, why not have a cup of coffee? Now, remember, this man has no intention of breaking his vow and eating doughnuts. But the totally predictable and inevitable result is – what? That he will give in and eat doughnuts! And can't you just hear his sad lament? "What went wrong? I prayed! I asked others to pray. I asked God for deliverance. Why try? I give up. You do your best, and look what happens!" If we learn nothing else from the parable of the doughnuts, we should learn that sincere intentions, and even prayers, are not enough. To have victory over temptation, we must have clear goals and sound strategies, and we must diligently carry them out.

2. Pray.

- a. Pray for God to keep you from temptation, and to deliver you through it.
- b. **1 Thessalonians 5:17** "Pray constantly."

3. Arm yourself with God's word.

- a. When the devil tempted Jesus three times in the wilderness, Jesus responded every time by quoting Scripture (Mt 4:1-11).
- b. A temptation is a lie. It is a lie about sin. It says that sin will be worth it; that it won't be costly; that God won't care; that nobody will know; that it will just be this once; that it won't hurt you; that everybody is doing it; that you can't be happy without it.
- c. Anytime you give in to temptation, it is because you believed the lie instead of the truth.
- d. You need to know God's word through and through, and then believe it.
- e. Don't start your day until you have spent time in prayer and in the word.

4. Gather with church family.
 - a. Surround yourself with people who are on the same path as you; they share the same goal – holiness; they are fighting the same enemy – Satan. Surround yourself with people who will not tempt you but will encourage you in the fight. People who will inspire you with their example. People who will lift you up in prayer. That’s what the church is supposed to be.
 - b. **Hebrews 10:24-25** “24 And let us consider one another in order to provoke love and good works, 25 not neglecting to gather together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging each other, and all the more as you see the day approaching.”
5. Recognize when you are most vulnerable to temptation.
 - a. You are most vulnerable to temptation when you are physically and emotionally weak. Our physical body affects our spirit, and vice versa.
 - b. To fight against temptation, remember the acronym HALT. You are most vulnerable to temptation when you are hungry, angry, lonely, or tired.
 - c. This means you need to take care of yourself emotionally and physically, and when you are in a vulnerable state, put your guard up.

III. CONCLUSION

1. **Saint Augustine** wrote, “A Christian’s whole life is temptation.”
2. You will battle with temptation until the day you die.
3. But here’s the good news.
 - i. When we sin, we don’t have to worry about losing our salvation, because Christ has already paid the penalty.
 - ii. When we sin, we don’t have to worry about God giving up on us. The bible promises that if we will confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us and cleanse us (1 Jn 1:9).
 - iii. When we die, we will immediately go to heaven and the battle with temptation will be over forever.
4. But for now. Let’s stay in the fight.

